

Senate Committee
Chair- Senator Gelser
Co Vice Chair- Senator Alan Olsen
Members- Senator Michael Dembow
 Senator Tim Kopp
 Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson

Regarding Senate Bill 243

My name is Roxanne Lovelace and I am a foster mom. I am also a mental health professional, behavior modification specialist, transportation technician, arbitrator, and most importantly a child advocate. This is just a short example of the many tasks not listed that is required of a foster parent. I also am a successful phased out foster youth. I was blessed to have had wonderful foster parents help me through my difficult time. I worked hard and chose not to allow my situation lead me to a life of turmoil. Its the love I received that lead me to open my home for foster care.

Foster parents have to fight daily to provide for the needs of children with limited resources available. We have to take a devastated child and build them back up to return them to hopefully a functioning and safe home. This task is not easy and all foster parents have had at one time, someone ask us how we can do it. My answer, "if we don't, who will?"

Senate Bill 243 will add another job description onto our already long list of jobs, legal professional. We will be expected to defend ourselves against accusations, most of them which will be repercussions from an angry parent who has lost custody of their child or children. I agree that the criminal actions of a limited group needs to be discovered early and investigated completely to ensure the protection of our children. But foster parents collectively should not pay the price for past bad abuses and the mistakes of DHS. This Bill will not only put foster parents through unnecessary humiliation and stress, it will create additional time and workload for an already overworked DHS system.

It is not uncommon to get complaints from families, it also isn't uncommon to get threats of violence, damage to property, and ridicule for helping their children through an emotional and devastating time. Though many of us didn't sign up for this "benefit" when we entered into this system, we still move forward because we love our children.

Oregon lost over 400 general applicant foster homes according to DHS in one year. If this bill moves forward, you will see the loss of more foster homes in this state. Many will not want to have to run their households in fear of having their homes scrutinized due to angry biological parents. Our foster home crisis is real and this will add more strain on the system. Ultimately, the children you are trying to protect will be the ones who suffer.

Thank your consideration and your time

Roxanne Lovelace